



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ART. XXIII.—*A Dissertation on the Antiquity of the Armenian Language.* By ARRATOON ISAAC AGANON, of New Julpha: with some Notes and Observations by the late T. M. DICKENSON, Esq., Secretary to the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

Read December 17, 1836.

FROM all that is preserved in the Holy Scriptures, and in those ancient histories which treat of the subject now under discussion, we are justified in assuming, that from the days of Adam till the time of Noah, and subsequently till the confusion of languages at Babel, "the whole earth was of one language and of one speech."—Genesis xi. 1. The question, therefore, resolves itself simply into this: Was the confusion of tongues which took place at Babel confined to those who were engaged on that great work of impiety and rebellion in the plains of Shinar, or was the punishment inflicted on the innocent as well as on the guilty, so as to affect Noah and those of his descendants who remained with the venerable patriarch in Armenia? For if it be acknowledged that the language of Noah remained unchanged, I hope to be able to prove satisfactorily, that that language was the Armenian.

On this point there exists a great diversity of opinions: for although it appears to have been generally allowed, by several people of the most undoubted antiquity, as the Syrians, the Hebrews, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, &c., that the original language of Noah was preserved, still no two of them can agree in deciding which that original language was, each being more intent upon establishing its own pretensions to originality, than in fairly and impartially investigating the truth. As, however, none of them have adduced stronger arguments in support of their claims than those who contend that the Hebrew is the primitive and original language, I shall confine myself to making a few observations on their arguments and reasoning, in the hope of being able to prove satisfactorily, that they cannot be considered as sufficient or conclusive.

The principal argument, in favour of the Hebrew being the original language, is drawn from this circumstance; that most of the proper names of the antediluvian patriarchs retain in the Hebrew

the significations imputed to them in the books of Moses.¹ Now as Moses was writing by the divine inspiration in Hebrew for the Hebrews, we may reasonably suppose that in rendering a word which was meant to be significant, although a proper name, he would give it in the language which was likely to be understood by the people for whom he was writing. Thus, when in relating the history of Lamech, he wished to make known to the children of Israel, that that patriarch gave to his son a name expressive of the hopes he entertained at the time of his birth, when he said, "This shall comfort us concerning our work, and the toil of our hands," (Genesis v. 29) he states that "he called his name Noah," a Hebrew word expressive of "rest or refreshment," adapted to the comprehension of the Hebrew nation. In like manner other nations of antiquity, in the records which they have preserved of the same personage, have called him, not by his Hebrew name Noah, a word insignificant and unintelligible to them, but by other names, as Saturnus, Xisuthrus, &c., words which in their own language were expressive of the idea which they wished to express. Thus, in our version of the books of Moses, where it is rendered in the English, "And he called the name of the well Ezek, because they strove with him," (Gen. xxvi. 20,) we read, "He called the name of the well Zercooman;" not that we mean that the well was actually named Zercooman, but we use a

¹ The proofs to establish this opinion are briefly and ably set forth by Bochart; and as arguments are here adduced to show their insufficiency, the following passage may not prove uninteresting:—

"Linguam Hebraicam omnium esse antiquissimam docent etymologicæ nominum, quotquot extant in historiâ Mosis, a mundi creatione, usque ad dispersionem gentium. Sic Hortus עֵדֶן Eden Hebræis est 'Hortus voluptatis, sive deliciarum.' Terra נֹדֹד Nod, 'Terra exilii,' quia ibi exulavit Cain. בבל 'Confusio,' quia lingue inibi confusæ sunt. אָדָם Adam, primus homo, dictus est quia ex האדמה Adama, seu terrâ, factus est. חוה Eve, a vitâ, prima mulier, quia mater omnium viventium. קַיִן Cain, unus e filiis, ab acquirendo, quia dixit mater, קָנִיתִי Acquisivi virum a Domino. Alius שֵׁת Seth, a ponendo, quia dixit, שֵׁת posuit mihi Deus semen alterum. הֲנוּךְ Enoch, a dedicando, quia natus in ipsâ dedicatione urbis quam ædificavit Cain. Alterus Enochii filius מֶתוּשֶׁלַח Methuselah anno diluvii mortuus, id significat ipso nomine, quod illi a patre iudicium prophetico spiritu. פֶּלֶג Phaleg est a dividendo quia in diebus ejus נִפְלְגָה divisa est terra. Tæcco allusiones ex Hebræâ linguâ petitas, ut cum de Noâ dictum est יִנְחָנֵנו 'Consolabitur nos,' et de Japheto יִפֶּת אֱלֹהִים לִפְתֵּי Deus dilatet Japhetum."

The arguments against the Chaldees, who have the same claims as the above, are founded by Bochart on the expression used in Genesis ii. 23, which is intelligible only in the Hebrew: "Vocabitur vir, quia ex viro sumpta est. Hebraice, אִישׁ Is pro viro, ita אִשָּׁה Issa pro muliere vox est usitatissima."

It will be observed that the objections, which are confined in our text to the example of Noah, are equally applicable in all the above cases.

word signifying "deprivation," to express the idea which is represented in the Hebrew by the Hebrew word *Ezek*. In like manner Josephus, when he states that the Armenians call the place in which Noah descended from the ark by the name *Apobaterion*,¹ does not mean that the Armenians actually used a word derived from the Greek, but merely that amongst them, the name of the place bears the same meaning as the Greek word *Apobaterion*, which implies "a going-forth," and is represented in the Armenian by the word *Nakhjivan*, the actual name of the place alluded to.

There are some, who contend that the language in which the books of Moses were written was the language of Adam, because, say they, it is manifest that Moses wrote in the language of Abraham, from whom he was descended; in like manner Abraham used the language of Terah, who used that of Shem, who used that of Noah, which was the language of A. m.² This seems to me to be nothing more than begging the question, and hardly deserves the name of an argument, as it might be applied with equal reason in the case of any other of the languages of antiquity. There are, indeed, some who contend that Eber, the ancestor of the Hebrews, did not assist at the building of Babel, and that, consequently, his language remained unchanged. But the Greek histories, which have preserved this story, contradict it in other places, where they say, that it is recorded that Eber was actually the architect who superintended the building of Babel, under Bale, or Nimrod, who exercised a paramount authority over all. In a Greek work called the *Smaller Genesis*, Syncellus tells us, that there was a tradition, that

¹ Joseph. Antiq. l. i. c. 3.

² The reasoning which gives most weight to this assertion is drawn from the argument, that Abraham and his forefathers, in a direct line up to Noah, must be looked on as heirs of the covenant, which God established with Noah and with Adam (Gen. ix. 9, and iii. 15); that consequently we have no reason to suppose that they joined in the work of impiety which was punished at Babel, and that their language consequently remained unaffected. This argument is ably set forth by Bochart, *Phaleg. lib. i. c. x.* To this, however, it may be answered, that a mere supposition founded on human reasoning and opinion, on mere mortal ideas of what would be most advisable and expedient, is, when applied to the acts of God, one of the most fertile sources of error which the history of religion or of philosophy has recorded. The natural and probable course of events is a far safer guide to the way of truth in a case so obscure as the one in question. Now if it be allowed, as I think it must, that it is natural to suppose that Noah did not wander to any great distance from the mountains of Ararat, and that the original language, if preserved at all, was preserved to him; it must also be allowed that it is most probable, as being most conformable to the natural course of events, that the original language was preserved in Armenia, and that, therefore, in any part of the argument at least, the probability is in favour of the claims of the Armenians.

an angel appeared to Moses, and told him that he had taught the Hebrew tongue to Abraham the Chaldean, and that the Hebrew was, therefore, considered as original. But these accounts are evidently as fabulous as they are at variance with each other and with the records of Scripture.

It cannot be doubted that Abraham spoke the language of the Chaldees.¹—See Genesis xi. 28—31; Judith v. 6; Acts vii. 4. Now the Chaldees originally inhabited the country in the immediate vicinity of the land of Shinar, in which the confusion of tongues took place. Whence, then, the argument that the language of the Chaldees remained unchanged? But allowing that it did, we shall find ourselves far from the solution of the question; for the language of the Phœnicians, Syrians, Arabs and others, are, equally with the Hebrew, cognate dialects of the Chaldean, differing from each other, not in essentials, but only in the degree which may now be perceived in the several dialects of the Armenian, as spoken at Constantinople, at Julpha, and at Angulis, or in some of the languages of Europe which have been derived about the same period from a common origin. Moreover, if it is argued that the language of the Chaldees remained unchanged, I would ask who were the people whose language was changed at the confusion of Babel? There is no reason for saying it was Noah, and those who were with him in Armenia, because we are told that the miracle was performed at Babel, “where the Lord came down to see the city, and the tower which the children of men² builded.”—Genesis xi. 5. Nor can we say it was the language of the Persians, or of the Greeks, or of the Egyptians, because we have no grounds for supposing that Greece and Persia and Egypt were then inhabited. The obvious answer is, that it was the people inhabiting the country in the vicinity of the place where the power of God was made manifest, who, or amongst whom, we have every reason to believe, were those who were subse-

¹ Ur and Haran, in Mesopotamia, are the places in which we first find the Chaldees established. Bochart takes a considerable liberty with geography in asserting that these early seats of the Chaldees, were “*haud procul a Corduenâ in qua constitit arena Nore.*”

² That Noah and those who remained with him were not intended by this expression, “the children of men,” is thus ably argued by Bochart:

“Sed neque Noam aut Semum aut Arphaxadam aut Heberum, ad quos pertinebat sædus, conspirasse verisimile est, in tam insane substructionis fabriciam, quia videntur excipi, cum versu 5^o descendisse dicitur Deus, ut vident civitatem et turrim, quam edificabant בני האדם *fili hominum*. Nam Genesis vi. verso 2^o filiabus hominum apponuntur filii Dei, ut fideles infidelibus; sic igitur insinuat Moses, solos filios hominum, id est solos infideles isti operi se mancipasse.”—Phaleg. lib. i. c. 10.

quently known as the Chaldees; from which it would follow that the present Chaldee, with its cognate dialects, the Arabic, Syrian, Phœnician, &c., must be regarded as one of the great families of languages, the origin of which was at the confusion of Babel.

There are some, indeed, who assert that the present Chaldee is derived from the Hebrew, an opinion which is not only highly improbable, but which positively militates against the facts recorded in the Holy Scriptures. For it is related by Moses, that "the Lord had said unto Abraham, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house," which we are distinctly told was in the land of the Chaldees, from which it is clear that Abraham was a Chaldee; and while history shows us that the Chaldeans never migrated to any great distance from Ur and Haran, where we first find them established, and that they gradually rose to be a most powerful nation, we find that Abraham, with no other of his countrymen, save only those of his own household, "departed out of Haran," as the Lord had commanded him; that he went down into the land of Canaan and into Egypt and that he sojourned till his death in the land of the Canaanites; that his son Isaac also, and Jacob the son of Isaac, spent their lives in the same foreign land, where they dwelt 215 years. The sons of Jacob went down into Egypt, where they and their descendants remained for a farther period of 215 years, when they went forth under Moses to possess the land which had been promised by the Lord to Abraham, their forefather. It appears, then, that for a space of 430 years, the language of the Israelites was confined to one family, who were strangers and sojourners in a foreign land; and as, during this time, they dwelt upon terms of the closest intercourse with the people amongst whom they dwelt, it is against all experience to suppose that they could possibly have preserved their language as pure as it was originally introduced by Abraham from Chaldea. We see, moreover, that the language in which the books of Moses were written, and which we must suppose to have been the language of the Israelites, though allied to the Chaldean, is nevertheless a separate and distinct language. It has also been shown that there are no grounds for supposing that the language of the Chaldees remained unchanged at the confusion of Babel; so that on every side the opinion of those who assert the originality and superior antiquity of the Hebrew language, is not only in the highest degree improbable, but is obviously opposed to any just conclusion to which fair reasoning and the records of Scripture are calculated to lead us; and as the arguments of other nations of antiquity in favour of the

originality of their own languages are not supported on better grounds than those which have been adduced on the part of the Hebrew, I will proceed to show the arguments upon which it is contended that the language of Noah, and consequently of Adam, has been preserved unchanged amongst the people of Armenia.

We are told in the Holy Scriptures that Noah, in the six hundredth year of his age, entered into the ark, taking with him seven other persons, namely, Noyemzara, his wife (whose name has been preserved amongst the records of the Armenians), and his three sons, Japheth, Shem, and Ham, with their wives; that the flood came down and continued till every living thing was destroyed, save only those which were preserved in the ark; that the waters prevailed upon the earth for 150 days, after which they gradually abated, and the ark at length rested upon the mountains of Ararat.¹ These mountains were certainly in Armenia. In the Syriac and Latin translations of the Bible, the word Ararat is rendered "Armenia," which is also the case in the English version, in 2 Kings xix. 37, and also in Isaiah xxxvii. 38. Jeremiah also uses Ararat for Armenia, li. 27. Josephus (*Antiq. lib. i. c. 3.*) calls Ararat a mountain of Armenia, and states that Berossus the Chaldean called it Mount Cordus in Armenia; by which name it is called in the Arabic and Chaldean translations of the Old Testament. Abydenus also, Nicholas of Damascus, and others, agree in placing Ararat in Armenia. The oldest, perhaps, of these early historians is Maribas of Catene, mentioned by Moses Chorenensis, *lib. i. c. 8*, from whom he writes, (*lib. i., c. 11 and 14.*) that the mountain was at first named Masis, from Amasia, our ancestor, whose name is still preserved in the town of Amasia, and that Ararat was the name of the district around it, so called from Araeus, another of our ancestors, and that it is also known by the name of Cordus, the general name of the great chain of mountains to which it belonged. Josephus also mentions, that in his time it was believed that the remnants of the ark were still in existence, which belief was strongly entertained amongst the Armenians, so late as the time of St. Jacob, Patriarch of Nisibeen, in the year A.D. 340.

¹ Speaking of Mount Ararat, Tavernier, who travelled through Armenia in the seventeenth century, says, "*Mont Ararat, que les Arméniens appellent Mesezou-sar, c'est à dire Montagne de l'Arche. Aussitôt les Arméniens la découvrent, ils baient la terre.*"—*Voy. de Taver. v. i. c. 2.*

Also Bochart: "*Communis sententia hæc est, Ararat esse Armeniam.*"—*Phaleg. lib. iii. c. 3*; in which he has expressed himself at length on this point.

Bryant also in like manner; he derives Ararat from ארריר, Harirad, which signifies ἀποβάρηριον, the Mountain of Descent,—*Vol. iii. p. 4.*

These proofs, I trust, will satisfactorily prove, what few perhaps of my readers will call in question, that the ark rested on a mountain in Armenia; and as there is nothing in the language of Scripture, nor any circumstances which would render it probable that Noah would wander forth in quest of a place wherein to settle, far from the scene of his miraculous preservation, situate as it was, in one of the finest countries in the world,¹ we are warranted in assuming that the patriarch, and such of his descendants as remained with him, established themselves in Armenia, speaking the language of the antediluvian world. Now we know from several examples which abound throughout the Old Testament, that it was customary in those times to fix the names of any new place, by some circumstance connected with its early history. Hence it may be inferred, that if in the country in which, as has been shown, Noah and his family descended from the ark, and fixed their residence, there are found any names significant of circumstances relating to the history of that early period, the language in which such names are significant, is the actual language which was then in use. Now according to the history of Moses of Chorene, the ark rested on Mount Masis in Armenia, at the foot of which mountain we find to this day a town and district, called Arnohwote; now this word [in Armenian, signifies "Noah placed foot," from Ar, "placed," Noh, "Noah," and wote, "foot." Again, in Genesis ix. 26, it is written, "And Noah began to be a husbandman, and planted a vineyard." Now adjoining to Arnohwote is a place called Akhooree, which signifies in Armenian, "he planted a vineyard," from Akh, "he planted," and oor, "vines." In the same vicinity is another place called Nakhijivan, which signifies "first halting-place," while others say it should be called Nakhsivan,²

¹ Strabo bears witness to the fertility of Armenia, and, which is singular, accidentally meets the objections of those, who contend that the ark did not rest in Armenia, because it is said in Scripture that Noah, from the place on which the ark rested sent forth a dove: "And the dove came to him in the evening, and in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off;" whereas the olive is not to be found in Armenia. But Strabo, at the end of a short passage on the fertility of a district in the north of Armenia, has these words, *φέρει δὲ καὶ ἔλαιον*: "it also produces the olive."—Geog. lib. xi. p. 528.

² Nakhijivan. Frequent mention of this place is found among the writers of Europe.

Ptolemy calls it Naxuana, *Ναξουάνα*. Tab. As. iii. and page 135. William de Rubruquis, who travelled into Tartary, A.D. 1253, makes this mention of it: "Araxi et Naxuane duo imminet montes Massis nomine, in quibus arca resedit."

Galanus also, a Roman presbyter, who wrote on the reconciliation of the Armenian Church with that of Rome, tells us that, according to the natives of Armenia, the true name of the place is Nakhidsevan, by which they say is signified "the first place of descent." Tavernier

which means "first departing-place," which is evidently, as the traditions of the country set forth, the place from which the first colonies emigrated, and is the place which Josephus calls Apobaterion, in which he tells us was the sepulchre of Noah. It is, moreover, stated in Armenian history, that on the death of Noah's wife, Noyanzar (or Nemzar, as she was called by some writers), her sons buried her in a place which was consequently called Marant,¹ which signifies in Armenian, "Mother is there," which name is still preserved in a town of Armenia. Now as these places are all actually in existence, bearing in the present language of Armenia the singular meanings above assigned to them, they cannot but be regarded as strong proofs in favour of the proposition which it is my object to establish, that the language of Noah, and consequently of Adam, has been preserved amongst the mountains of Armenia.

It should further be observed, that there is nothing whatever in sacred history to which this opinion can be said to be opposed. For even in the account of the confusion at Babel, it is stated "that the Lord did *there* confound the languages of all the earth." By *there* is meant the plains of Shinar, the land of Babel, not that of Armenia. For otherwise the word *there* would have been superfluous; and it cannot be said that a like reasoning will equally apply to other places as well as Armenia, and give grounds for asserting that the languages of the people of Persia and of Syria must also in like manner be supposed to be original, because we have no grounds for assuming that those countries were then inhabited at all, whereas we know that Armenia had been inhabited since the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat.

Many more arguments in support of my proposition may be drawn from a fair reasoning on the facts and circumstances which

Tavernier calls it Naksivan, and says of it, "Naksivan est, selon eux, la plus ancienne ville du monde; elle a été bâtie à trois lieues de la montagne sur laquelle s'arrêta l'arche de Noé. C'est ce qu'indique le nom Arménien, forme de Nak, 'navire,' et de Sivan, 'arrêté, ou demeuré.'"—Voy. de Taver., tom. i. c. 2.

The learned translators of Moses Chorenensis thus make mention of it: "Josephus (Lib. i. c. 3.) de Nonchi ex arcæ egressu agens, hæc scribit, ἀποβατηριον μὲν τοὺν τόπον τοῦτον Ἀρμένιοι καλοῦσιν. Hunc autem locum Armenii exsecutionis locum appellant. Jam vero non longe a campo Araratensi sita est, urbs Armeniæ celeberrima, quam Armenii uno ore vetustissimum mundi esse oppidum tradunt ut statim post diluvium, a Noncho conditum, nomine Nakhidshevan, quod vocabulam Armeniacum, primum descensionis locum sonat."—Gul. et Georg. Whiston. in Prefat. ad Mosis Choren. Hist. Armen., p. iv.

¹ Maranta. "Les Arméniens prétendent, que ce fut le lieu où Noé vint habiter en sortant de l'arche; ils ajoutent qu'il y fut enterré, et que sa femme eut son tombeau à Marante sur le chemin de Tauris."—Voy. de Taver., tom. i. c. 2.

have been preserved regarding the point in question, some few of which I will here adduce. The confusion of tongues is generally allowed to have occurred in the second century after the deluge, which Noah survived 350 years. He must, therefore, have been alive at the time of the confusion. Now it is hardly to be supposed, that he to whom the Almighty had said, "Thee have I seen righteous before me, in this generation," (Genesis vii. 1.) and this, too, before the fearful manifestation of divine vengeance, from which he and his family were alone preserved, should so soon afterwards have lapsed into rebellion against the Most High, by joining what is termed a "wicked conspiracy," particularly as we read "that he was found righteous and *preserved blameless* unto God." (Wisdom x.) We may therefore suppose that the punishment of the wicked was not inflicted upon the "righteous one;" that the language of Noah, and of those whose attendance on the venerable patriarch prevented them from following the migration to Shinar, was not affected by the confusion of Babel, and consequently that the ancient language of the antediluvians was preserved unchanged in Armenia. It is no where recorded where Noah died, but there is a tradition amongst the Armenians, preserved in a work called Zoowetsa, or "The Collection," which states that he was buried with his wife at Marant, to which Syncellus and Cedrenus both bear witness; and Josephus, when recording the death of Noah, states, that after that event there was an emigration from Armenia, from which it would follow that Noah himself died in Armenia.

If it is allowed that the language of Noah was preserved in Armenia till the death of that patriarch, it cannot be said that it has been subsequently changed, because the ancient kings of Armenia were descended in a direct line from Haic, who lived with Noah in Armenia; and although our country has in later times been overrun and occupied by foreign powers, the language has not been materially affected, as may be seen by comparing it with the languages of those nations by whom it has been at different times overrun.¹ I do not mean to say that it has not undergone, in the course of centuries, such partial changes as all languages, however perfect, are subject to; but I maintain that it has undergone no material alteration since the days of Noah,—that consequently it is the original language of mankind.

¹ This is attested by Cirbied, Professeur Royale de la Langue Arménienne à l'Ecole Royale: "Du temps des Empereurs d'Assyrie lors des conquêtes des Macedoniens et des Romains, à l'époque des règnes des Arsacides en Arménie, la langue de cette contrée emprunta des mots étrangers, mais elle n'éprouva aucun changement essentiel."

And indeed the beauty and singular perfection of the Armenian,¹ even when viewed in its present state, must be regarded, by all who

¹ The Armenian language is a subject which appears to have been very much neglected and misrepresented. The accounts of the writers of antiquity regarding it, are very imperfect. Strabo, who from writing so soon after the occupation of Armenia by the Romans, may be supposed to have had as good an opportunity as any other writer of antiquity for gaining some information regarding the language of Armenia, evidently knew but little on the subject; for he tells us, in one place, "that the Armenians and Medes were a cognate people with the Thessalians," (Geog. lib. xi. p. 531), and in another he says, "that the Armenians appear to be nearly allied to the Syrians and Arabs," (Geog. lib. i. p. 41.) And to these he adds the Assyrians, the Arians, and the Erembi, as being considered a cognate people. It is not unlikely that he was led into this error by mistaking the language of the Armenian merchants, interpreters, &c., who probably attended the armies of Rome in the Armenian campaigns, for the genuine and ancient language of Armenia. And even Sir William Jones appears to have been no less uninformed on the subject, for he says "that he is convinced from the best information procurable in Bengal, that its basis was ancient Persian, of the same Indian stock with the Zand, and that it has been gradually changed since the time when Armenia ceased to be a province of Iran." We have fortunately the testimony of several writers, whose knowledge of Armenian cannot be called in question, to show how erroneous are these opinions, and to corroborate the assertions contained in our text. Thus the two Whistons declare, "*Ceterum lingue Armeniæ antiquitas inde etiam comprobari potest, quod ab ullâ aliâ recenti linguâ nullo modo perfluxisse videtur.*" So also Ciriéd: "*Malgré certains rapports et certaines similitudes d'un rang primordial, la langue Arménienne est toujours une langue isolée, sans mélange avec aucune autre langue.*"—Page 6.

¹ With regard to the power of the Armenian language, for which our author contends, as a proof of its having been the original language of the earth, he is fully borne out by the most able writers on the language of Armenia. Thus the Whistons above quoted: "*Quod si lingue Hæcæne naturam hoc e genere prospicere libet, tanta est ejus copia atque ubertas, sibi maximam partem propria, non ab aliis gentibus adscita, quantum ex studiis nostris cognoscere potuimus, ut vetustissimis temporibus primordiali sua cepisse videatur.*" So likewise Aucher, (in Prefat. ad Euseb. Pamph. Chron. Sect. ii. p. 11.) "*Id vero tum Hæcæne lingue ubertati ac felicitati tribuendum quod in omnes prorsus dicendi modos inætos etiam et peregrinos facile inflectitur,*" &c. And again: "*Sæpe fit, ut in quibus e Græco transferendis, Latini maxime laborant, ea Armenii majore nescio facilitate, ac felicitate convertunt.*" As to Armenian having been the original language, the following philosophical observation of Ciriéd contains perhaps all that will be allowed on the subject: "*Des historiens,*" says the Professor, "*et des commentateurs de la Bible, ont soutenus que la langue Arménienne était celle que parlait Noé, et qu'elle fut conservée en Arménie depuis le temps de ce patriarche jusqu'à nos jours. Nous croyons qu'en admettant les traditions de certains auteurs profanes, avec l'autorité de l'Ecriture Sainte, cette opinion serait la plus probable dans cette question purement conjecturale.*"

A general objection may be raised against the proposition maintained in this paper, on the grounds of the Armenian not having been a written language till the beginning of the fifth century of the Christian æra, when Mesropes, about A. D. 406, organized an alphabet of the Armenian language; after which it is allowed, that a

are capable of judging, as a proof that it possesses beyond all other languages, ancient or modern, good grounds for claiming the peculiar distinction of being the original language of the earth. For it is a singular fact, that a native of Armenia, with a thorough knowledge of the language of his country, and of all the numerous varieties of sound which its copious alphabet enables it to express, has little difficulty in acquiring and pronouncing the words of any

wonderful degree of alacrity was displayed by the literati of Armenia, who before A. D. 450 had translated above six hundred works of foreign literature into the language of their native country; and this objection, it may be contended, is an argument against not only the authenticity of the ancient traditions and histories of Armenia, but also against the antiquity of the language itself; but the objection, in my opinion, is not of much force. For the history of Armenia is drawn from traditions and written sources of the highest antiquity. Of the traditions, it is recorded by Moses of Chorene that the ancient Armenians had preserved in verses, which they sang to music, records which extended as far back as the time of the deluge, and historical traditions of Semiramis and the early princes of Assyria. And, as regards the histories, that of Moses of Chorene was taken in great measure, as he himself declares, from a famous book of Maribaz Cateneensis, who about the year before Christ 130, was sent by Valarsaces, king of Armenia, to examine the royal archives of the Parthian kings, among which he found a book which shewed in the title page that it had been translated from the Chaldee by order of Alexander the Great, from which Maribaz collected the materials for his own history of Armenia, which we are told he wrote in Greek and Syriac. Moreover the Armenians, although for many centuries they had no alphabet of their own, made use of those of the neighbouring nations, using chiefly the Greek and the Persian characters, of which it is recorded by Moses of Chorene, "that there were preserved amongst the Armenians, innumerable volumes of histories, &c. written in these characters." The Syriac also was occasionally used, as we read in Diodorus Siculus, lib. xix. Neither is the want of an Armenian alphabet, till so late a period as the fifth century after Christ, any argument against the originality of the language. For the Arabic, at least the language of the Koreish, had no written character till a period later than that assigned to the alphabet of the Armenians; and although, as the Arabs pretend to assert, the greater part of the words of their language may be lost, we have reason to believe that the structure of that exquisitely beautiful language has never been materially affected; words and phrases, and accent and idiom, those modes of language which depend upon the memory or caprice of men, may have changed perhaps as much among the Arabs, as we see they have in the nations of Europe; but their language bears about it, in the matchless simplicity and uniformity of its structure, that which must ever preserve it from corruption. The language of the most ancient writings of the Arabs, is the same as would be employed for a similar purpose by the learned of the present day, saving only some words and expressions which have fallen out of use in the course of 1300 years. And if in the structure of the language of Armenia, there is any thing of a similar preservative nature, it is, I think, certain, that the circumstance of there not having been for so many centuries any written character or organized alphabet, is not a good argument that the language of the country has therefore, of necessity, been materially changed, or that it is not essentially the same language as was spoken in the early ages of the world, by the first settlers on the hills of Armenia.

other language whatever, as correctly as if it were his own native language; whereas in other languages, the alphabet of any one will seldom be found capable of expressing correctly the power of all the letters of any *one* other, even though that one be a cognate dialect, and nearly allied to the same original. And the same may be said of the power of our language, in its great capability for the clear and general expression of ideas; for it is well-known to all those who have made the attempt, that there is no difficulty in translating from any other language into the Armenian, and this too in such a manner, that the work translated, however difficult and abstruse it may be, will generally be found to be improved by the translation, whereas to translate from the Armenian into any other language, ancient or modern, is a work of the greatest toil and difficulty, as is shown by the translation of the Armenian history of Moses of Chorene, by the sons of the famous William Whiston, which while it evinces the singular industry and great knowledge of Armenian which these two learned Englishmen possessed, is at the same time a convincing proof to those who are enabled to form a judgment on the subject, that they were in many places far from understanding the spirit of the author, whose work they so carefully and so ably translated.

I should, perhaps, observe what might by some be adduced as an objection, that it is related by some of the historians of Armenia, that Haic, the great founder of the Armenian nation, was actually present at the confusion of Babel, and that after that event he returned with a small party of followers, and settled in Armenia; and hence it might be objected, that as his language must have been changed at Babel, the language of Armenia would also be from him a changed language: on which I would observe in the first place, that it is not a generally received opinion that the language of Haic was changed at Babel; and in the second place, supposing such to have been the case, I would ask is it possible, I will not say probable, that a descendant of Noah, accompanied by only a small band of followers, should have been able to extirpate the language of the patriarch and of those who remained around him in Armenia, and to instruct them all in a strange language? The affirmative of the proposition cannot be maintained with any appearance of proof or probability, and consequently the objection, although we allow it every advantage, must fall to the ground as undeserving of attention.
